

Message Text

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70

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00

PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 AID-20 EB-11 NSC-10

CIEP-02 SAL-01 SS-14 STR-08 OMB-01 CEA-02 COME-00

TRSE-00 RSR-01 /140 W

----- 124160

R 221236 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY KAMPALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2206

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KAMPALA 1075

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT EIND UG KE GW

SUBJECT: AMIN ALLOCATES BUSINESS TO EX- MINISTER KIRONDE

1. PRESIDENT AMIN HAS ALLOCATED D. T. DOBIE, MERCEDES SALES AND SERVICE COMPANY, TO EX- MINISTER OF TOURISM, APOLO KIRONDE. ALLOCATION WAS BECAUSE KIRONDE QTE HAS DONE A LOT FOR UGANDA UNQTE.

COMPANY IS NOT BEING CONFISCATED, AMIN SAID, BECAUSE FULL COMPENSATION WILL BE PAID TO WEST GERMAN NATIONALS. HE SAID HE WOULD MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN UGANDA AND WEST GERMANY AND

WOULD ALLOW GERMAN EXPERTS TO COME TO TRAIN UGANDANS IN MAINTENANCE OF GERMAN CARS. PRESIDENT SAID ARRANGEMENTS WOULD SOON BE MADE FOR KIRONDE TO VISIT THE D. T. DOBIE HEADQUARTERS IN WEST GERMANY TO FAMILIARIZE HIMSELF WITH THEIR OPERATIONS. AMIN ALSO TOLD KIRONDE NOT TO HESITATE TO RECRUIT EUROPEANS FOR LIMITED PERIODS TO MAINTAIN VEHICLES WHILE UGANDANS ARE BEING TRAINED.

2. COMMENT: THIS PARTICULAR FIRM IS IMPORTANT TO AMIN, FOR HIS GOVERNMENT AND ARMY VIRTUALLY RUN ON MERCEDES; SO HE WILL
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PROBABLY DO ALL HE CAN TO KEEP IT GOING. HIS OFFER OF COMPENSATION AND STATEMENT REGARDING GOOD RELATIONS WITH WEST GERMANY APPEAR WELL INTENTIONED, EXCEPT THAT D. T. DOBIE IS NOT GERMAN-OWNED. GERMAN FIRST SECRETARY TOLD EMBOFF (SEE KAMPALA A-241) THAT IF DOBIE FIRM WERE TO BE TAKEN OVER, HE EXPECTED AMIN TO ASK FOR ADVISOR AND GERMANY WOULD PROBABLY FULFILL REQUEST.

3. IN CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE AND F. S. INSPECTOR LUPPI MARCH 22, WEST GERMAN AMBASSADOR CONFIRMED THAT DOBIE IS A SUBSIDIARY OF A KENYAN FIRM OWNED BY SWISS WIDOW OF LATE D. T. DOBIE, WHO WAS A BRITISH KENYAN. KOPF HAD JUST COME FROM MEETING WITH ACTING FONMIN ETIANG, WHO TOLD HIM GOU HAD AT FIRST CONSIDERED MAKING DOBIE A PARASTATAL FIRM, BUT IN KEEPING WITH GENERAL AMIN'S BIAS AGAINST SOCIALISM IT WAS DECIDED TO GIVE A PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL (KIRONDE) A CHANCE TO MAKE A GO OF IT.

4. KOPF RECALLED THAT GOU HAS BEEN INTENDING TO TAKE OVER DOBIE FIRM FOR MANY YEARS, GOING BACK TO OBOTE GOVERNMENT. ONE REASON IS THAT IT IS A LUCRATIVE ENTERPRISE; ANOTHER IS THAT SPARE PARTS ARE PURCHASED THROUGH THE NAIROBI PARENT FIRM AT PRICES UGANDA FEELS ARE EXHORBITANT. AN ADDITIONAL REASON FOR THIS TAKEOVER, KOPF SPECULATED, IS THAT IT IS LOCATED ON JINJA ROAD, ONE OF MAIN KAMPALA STREETS ON WHICH ALL FIRMS MUST BE UGANDAN-RUN AND MUST HAVE UGANDAN NAMES, BY ONE OF AMIN'S DECREES. PRESUMABLY KOPF EXPLAINED TO ETIANG THAT THERE IS NO WEST GERMAN INTEREST IN DOBIE EXCEPT FOR MERCEDES' WISH TO HAVE A WELL-MANAGED AGENCY IN KAMPALA.

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